OUR HOUSE
OUR HERITAGE

A PLAN FOR THE WHITE HOUSE AND
PRESIDENT'S PARK IN THE 21ST CENTURY

# COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN

## FOR THE WHITE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S PARK

HE WHITE HOUSE IS "AMERICA'S HOUSE," THE MOST POTENT SYMBOL OF THE NATION'S DEMOCRATIC IDEALS.

IT IS THE ONLY HOME OF A HEAD OF STATE REGULARLY OPEN, FREE TO THE PUBLIC, OFFERING ORDINARY CITIZENS A GLIMPSE OF HOW THEIR LEADERS LIVE AND WORK.

INSTEAD OF A REMOTE ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENT, IT IS A LIVING SYMBOL OF GOVERNMENT'S ACCESSIBILITY.

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# A HOUSE, A HERITAGE

*The story of the White House is the story of America.* In its rooms and gardens and ceremonial spaces can be read the development of the nation, from the founding of Washington in 1791 to its sacking by the British in 1814, through the Civil War, two world wars, the Great Depression, and many other foreign and domestic crises. ▮ In good times and bad, the White House has been "America's House," the most potent symbol of the nation's democratic ideals. It is the only home of a head of state regularly open free to the public, offering ordinary citizens a glimpse of how their leaders live and work. It has always been a living symbol of government's accessibility rather than an isolated architectural monument. ▮ And yet for all its symbolic importance, the White House is also a 200-year-old building that must play an extraordinary range of roles: home and office of the president, historic site, museum, tourist attraction, civic centerpiece, national symbol and world stage. It is the headquarters of the executive branch of government, where the most critical political decisions are made, and the ceremonial center of the nation, which communicates America's values to the world. More than one million people visit it each year, and millions more would like to. ▮ In accommodating this rush of competing demands, planning for the White House and adjacent President's Park has often been piecemeal and ad hoc. Problems that should have been addressed have been ignored to the point of becoming institutionalized. The press briefing room, one

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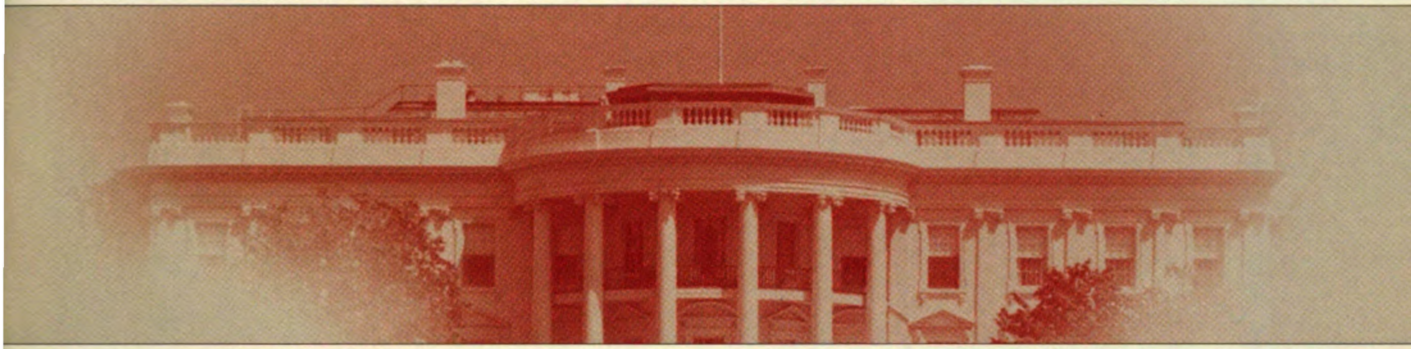


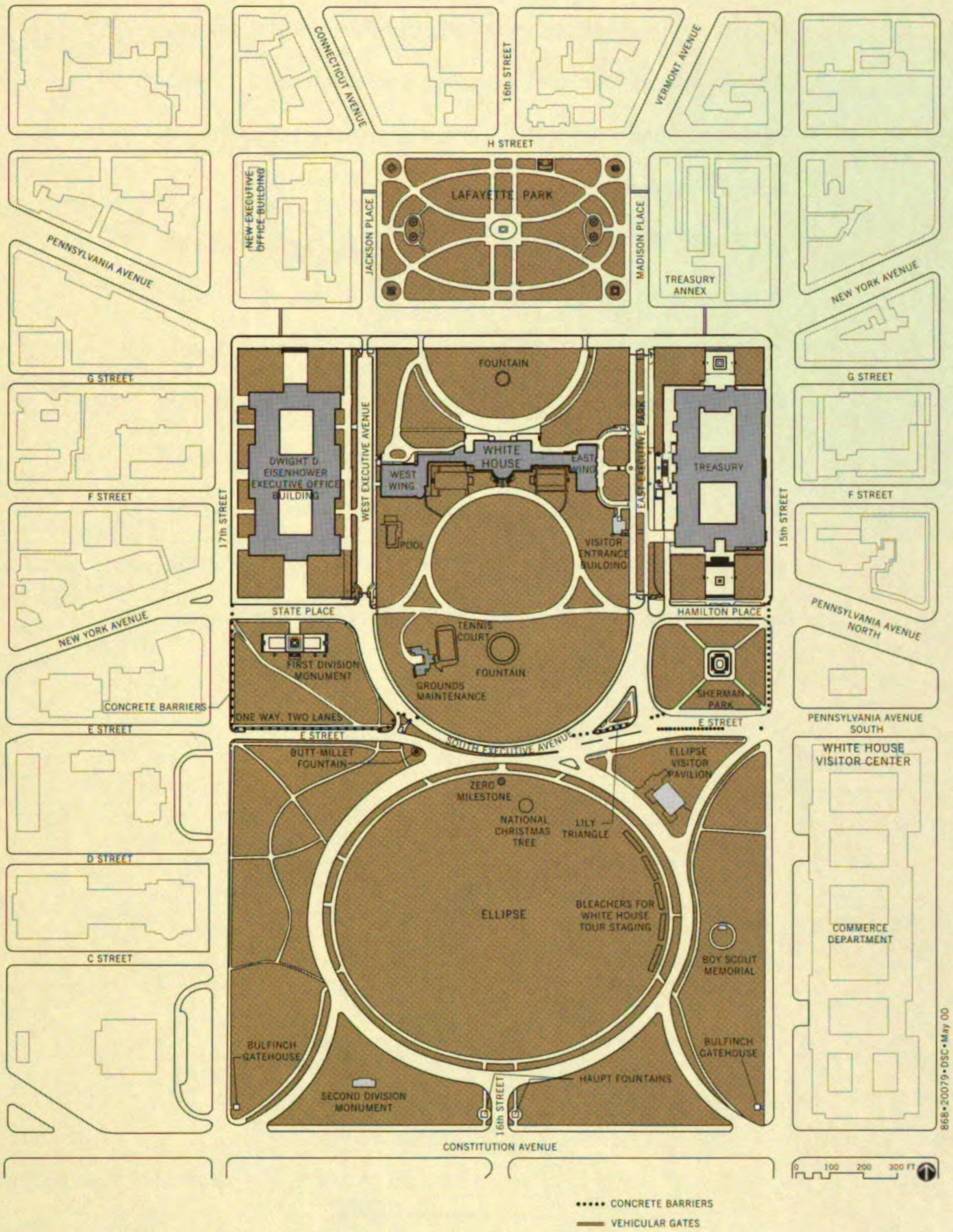
of the world's communication centers, still resembles a set from a 1950s television program. Presidential staff must stand two and three deep at important meetings for lack of space. There is no room to store furniture and equipment for state events; views out to President's Park, among the most significant historic landscapes in America, are marred by parked cars and lines of delivery trucks. ▮ The *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park* preserves the historic integrity of both, while accommodating the needs of the presidency in the 21st century. It will make the White House work better by modernizing its infrastructure, expanding its meeting and storage space, and adding facilities for the press. It will create underground parking for White House staff and indoor recreation space for the first family. A new education center, featuring architectural models, interactive exhibits and special programs, will give visitors fresh insights into the White House, as well as a reason to come back. ▮ This is the first comprehensive plan for the White House, distilled from dozens of technical reports and alternatives. It contains practical suggestions for maintaining the White House as both the home of the president and the seat of government in an era of political fragmentation and bewildering technological change. It reflects a broad consensus that preserving the historic integrity of the White House and its setting is above politics and party; careful long-range planning serves not a particular president but the institution of the presidency and the larger interests of the nation.

# STARTING POINTS

When George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant laid out President's Park in 1791, they envisioned it as the setting for the White House and the centerpiece of the new capital. Covering 82 acres from H Street to Constitution Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets, the site was the first parcel acquired for the federal city and is still listed as "Reservation Number 1" in the land records of the District of Columbia. In addition to the White House, the park includes the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Lafayette Park, the Treasury Building, the Ellipse and numerous monuments and memorials.

Preserving this priceless cultural and symbolic landscape within the context of a modern city and a modern presidency is the broad goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park.* As the first such plan, it replaces the fragmented and reactive approach of the past with a coherent and integrated strategy for the future. No more quick fixes that turn out to be more expensive than permanent ones.

The first recommendation is that President's Park once again be a pedestrian precinct where visitors don't have to dodge cars and delivery trucks to reach the White House grounds. All new structures will be placed underground, out of public view, to avoid disturbing the historic landscape or intruding farther into the city.

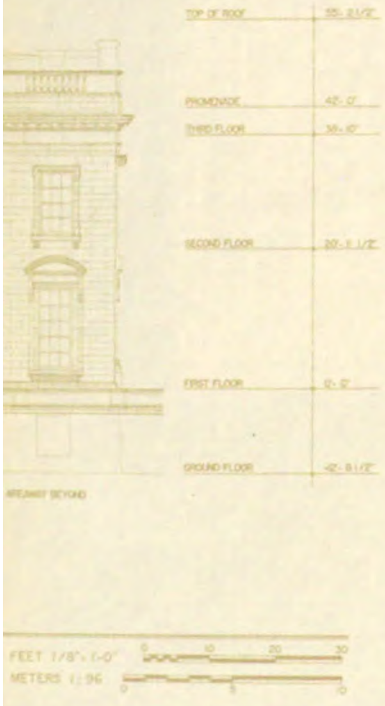

H STREET
CONNECTICUT AVENUE
16th STREET
VERMONT AVENUE
NEW EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
JACKSON PLACE
LAFAYETTE PARK
MADISON PLACE
TREASURY ANNEX
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
NEW YORK AVENUE
G STREET
FOUNTAIN
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
WEST EXECUTIVE AVENUE
WEST WING
WHITE HOUSE
EAST WING
EAST EXECUTIVE PARK
TREASURY
F STREET
17th STREET
15th STREET
POOL
VISITOR ENTRANCE BUILDING
STATE PLACE
HAMILTON PLACE
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NORTH
NEW YORK AVENUE
TENNIS COURT
FIRST DIVISION MONUMENT
FOUNTAIN
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE
SHERMAN PARK
CONCRETE BARRIERS
ONE WAY, TWO LANES
E STREET
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SOUTH
SOUTH EXECUTIVE AVENUE
WHITE HOUSE VISITOR CENTER
BUTT-MILLET FOUNTAIN
ELLIPSE VISITOR PAVILION
ZERO MILESTONE
NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE
LILY TRIANGLE
D STREET
ELLIPSE
BLEACHERS FOR WHITE HOUSE TOUR STAGING
COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
C STREET
BOY SCOUT MEMORIAL
BULFINCH GATEHOUSE
BULFINCH GATEHOUSE
SECOND DIVISION MONUMENT
HAUPT FOUNTAINS
16th STREET
CONSTITUTION AVENUE
868-20079-DSC-May 00
0 100 200 300 FT
CONCRETE BARRIERS
VEHICULAR GATES

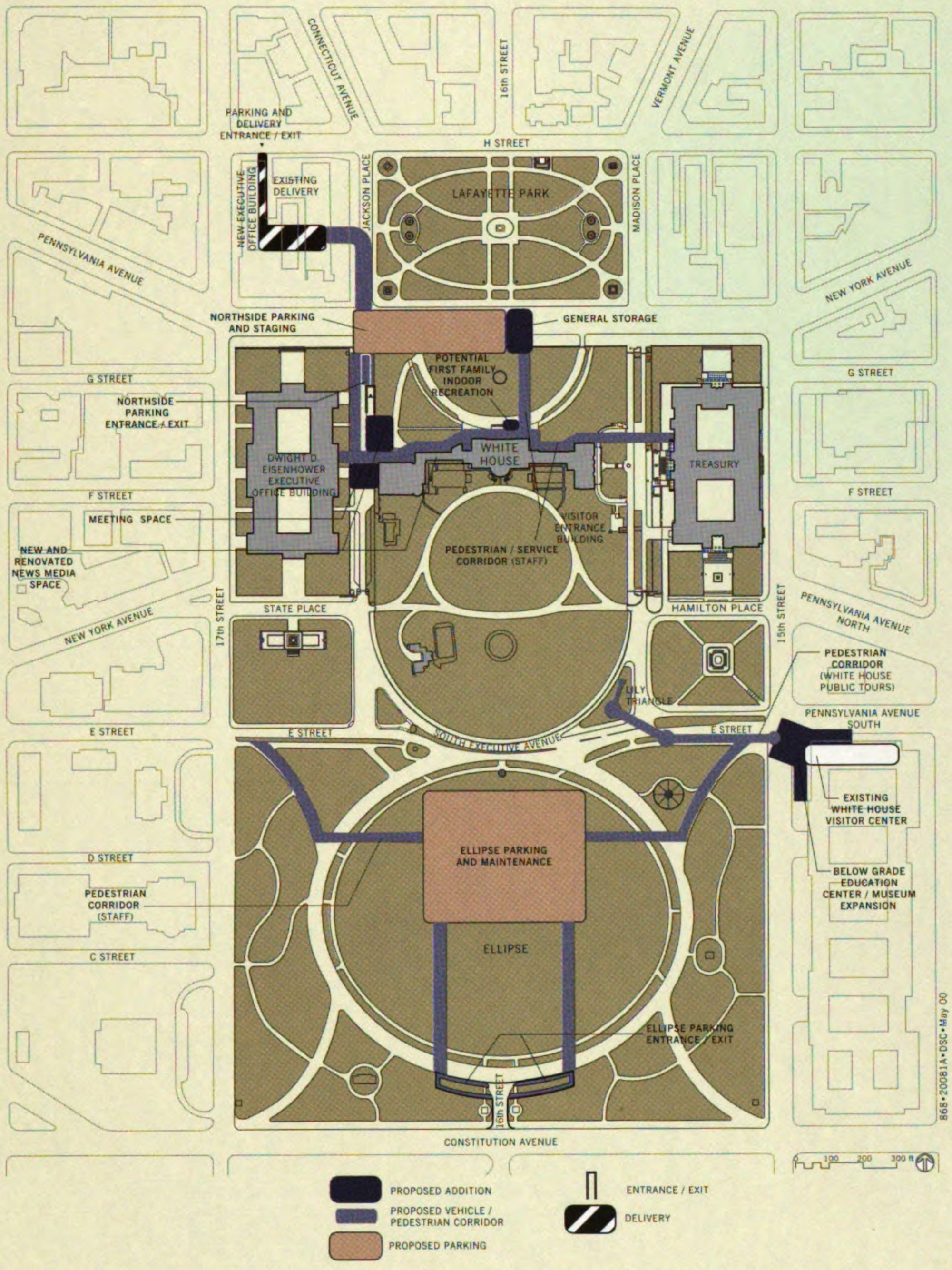
EXISTING CONDITIONS

THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AT
THE WHITE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S PARK REFLECT
DECADES OF PIECEMEAL CHANGES.

The White House is also a priceless educational resource that should excite students, scholars and the visiting public. A new education center, featuring innovative exhibits and expanded public programs, will broadcast the White House story to the nation and the world.

Finally, the White House and President's Park are part of Washington, precious open space in the middle of a dense urban environment. They offer dramatic views of the Capitol, the Potomac River and the magnificent distances beyond. The Ellipse is among the most popular places in the city for games and jogging and public festivals. All of this will be preserved as a reminder of how the White House is connected to the other branches of government, to the people of Washington and to the entire nation.


TOP OF ROOF
55'-2 1/2"
PROMENADE
42'-0"
THIRD FLOOR
38'-10"
SECOND FLOOR
20'-11 1/2"
FIRST FLOOR
0'-0"
GROUND FLOOR
-12'-8 1/2"
AREAWAY BEYOND
FEET 1/8"=1'-0"
0
10
20
30
METERS 1:96
0
5
10


CONNECTICUT AVENUE
16th STREET
VERMONT AVENUE
PARKING AND DELIVERY ENTRANCE / EXIT
H STREET
NEW EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
EXISTING DELIVERY
JACKSON PLACE
LAFAYETTE PARK
MADISON PLACE
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
NEW YORK AVENUE
NORTHSIDE PARKING AND STAGING
GENERAL STORAGE
POTENTIAL FIRST FAMILY INDOOR RECREATION
G STREET
NORTHSIDE PARKING ENTRANCE / EXIT
WHITE HOUSE
TREASURY
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
F STREET
MEETING SPACE
VISITOR ENTRANCE BUILDING
NEW AND RENOVATED NEWS MEDIA SPACE
PEDESTRIAN / SERVICE CORRIDOR (STAFF)
NEW YORK AVENUE
17th STREET
STATE PLACE
HAMILTON PLACE
15th STREET
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NORTH
PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR (WHITE HOUSE PUBLIC TOURS)
LILY TRIANGLE
E STREET
SOUTH EXECUTIVE AVENUE
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SOUTH
EXISTING WHITE HOUSE VISITOR CENTER
D STREET
ELLIPSE PARKING AND MAINTENANCE
BELOW GRADE EDUCATION CENTER / MUSEUM EXPANSION
PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR (STAFF)
C STREET
ELLIPSE
ELLIPSE PARKING ENTRANCE / EXIT
16th STREET
CONSTITUTION AVENUE
868•20081A•DSC•May 00
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PROPOSED ADDITION
PROPOSED VEHICLE / PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
PROPOSED PARKING
ENTRANCE / EXIT
DELIVERY

BELOW GROUND PROPOSED PLAN

NEW UNDERGROUND GARAGES,
CORRIDORS AND LOADING DOCKS WILL RESTORE
THE VISUAL INTEGRITY OF
THE WHITE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S PARK.

# LIVING AND WORKING IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Every president since John Adams has tried to make the White House less like a museum and more like a home. Some have redecorated rooms or acquired important paintings and furniture; others have planted trees, designed gardens or otherwise domesticated the landscape. Harry Truman added a balcony. Dwight Eisenhower installed a putting green on the south lawn. The Kennedy children had a stable for their ponies, and Amy Carter built a tree house.

As a national symbol the White House is unsurpassed, but as home, a place to live, it has serious shortcomings. Within its relentless formality, no indoor recreation space exists where members of the first family can relax and be themselves. Nor does the White House have sufficient storage space for the innumerable state functions. Imagine hosting four or five diplomatic receptions a week, and each time having to transport tables, chairs and stages to the house, set them up, then truck them back to a warehouse until the next big event. That's how things work at the White House, and it is chaotic and costly. Closets, corridors and driveways overflow with furniture and equipment, as though the staff were having a tag sale. No modern hotel would put up with such inefficiencies, yet the White House has been doing it for years because it has no choice.

For these reasons, the *Comprehensive Design Plan* is recommending changes at the White House, mainly the addition

PRESERVING "AMERICA'S HOUSE" IN THE CONTEXT OF A MODERN CITY AND A MODERN PRESIDENCY IS THE GOAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN.

of indoor recreation space to make it more livable. This new area, a combination den, gym and entertainment space, would be located underground, outside the White House, and probably immediately north of the Executive Residence. The goal is to make the house friendlier and more livable for future first families without compromising its historic integrity.

But the White House is also the quintessential home/office, with a large presidential apartment upstairs over the national shop. Like the residence, the business side of the White House needs to be brought into the 21st century. The main problems are outdated utilities, a shortage of meeting space, inadequate quarters for the White House press corps — now numbering in the thousands — and the glut of cars, trucks and delivery vans that overruns President's Park.

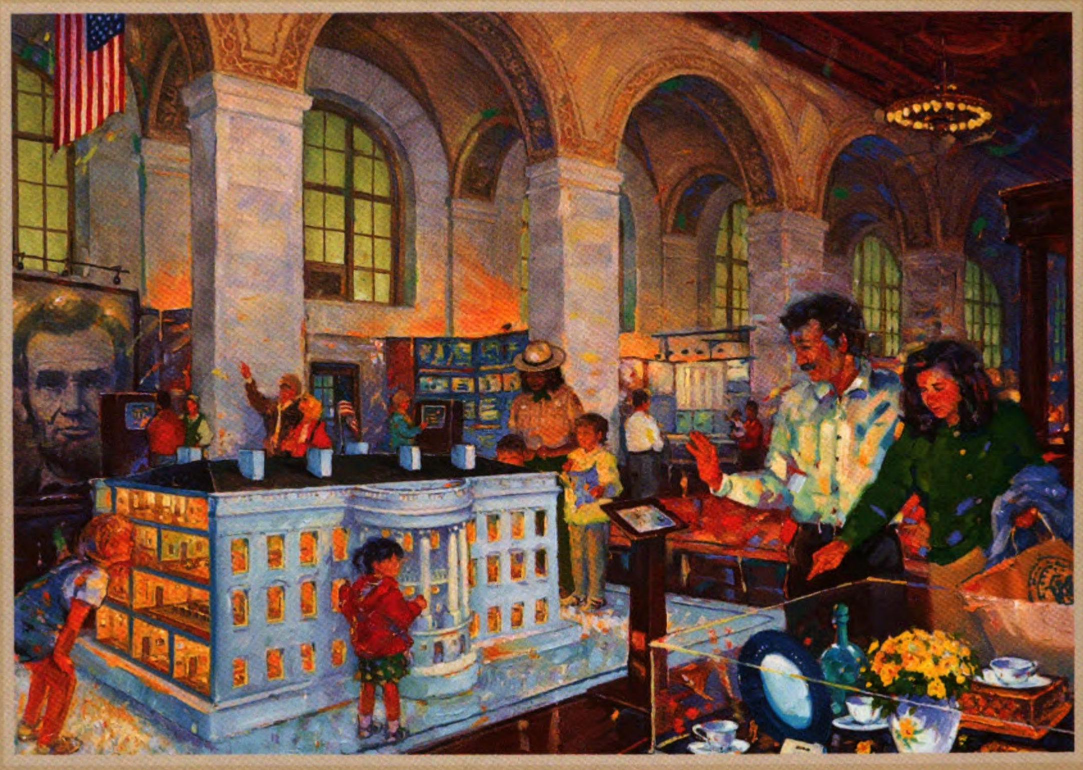
This tangle of trucks and vans will be redirected to loading docks beneath the New Executive Office Building, with deliveries to the White House and adjacent buildings made by small electric carts along a network of new underground corridors. Additional storage space beneath Pennsylvania Avenue will relieve pressure from nonstop special events — everything from state dinners to Easter egg rolls — that comprise daily life at the White House.

The *Comprehensive Design Plan* recommends additional meeting rooms for the White House staff beneath West Executive Avenue. This new space will reduce dependency on historic rooms in neighboring buildings, which are typically small, technologically inadequate and acoustically inferior.

The news media will continue to occupy the first floor of the west colonnade, as well as new quarters beneath West Wing Drive containing the presidential briefing room, interview rooms and additional space for television crews, photographers and White House correspondents. For the first time, visiting journalists will have an adequate place to work.

Parking is a problem throughout Washington, and the White House and President's Park are no exception. To reclaim the park from the automobile, the plan proposes two significant additions: a two-story, 290-car parking garage beneath Pennsylvania Avenue, and an 850-car garage under the Ellipse. The first will be for motorcades, visiting dignitaries and senior White House staff; the second for staff during the week and possibly the public on weekends and holidays. The garages will improve life not only at the White House but throughout central Washington by reclaiming the Ellipse from the automobile and giving it back to the people.

A SHORTAGE OF SPACE HAS PRODUCED AN OVERCROWDED PRESS BRIEFING ROOM AND CLUTTERED SERVICE ENTRANCES.



THE EXPANDED EDUCATION CENTER
WILL TELL THE STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE
AND THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY.

# LEARNING FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

Five days a week, every week of the year, thousands of people gather along E Street and East Executive Park to tour the White House. In the spring and summer the lines start forming at 4 a.m., and many visitors wait for hours in rain or baking heat to walk through the Red Room, the East Room, and the elegant State Dining Room, where presidents entertain visiting heads of state.

For many of the 1.2 million people who cross the threshold each year, the White House tour is the highlight of their trip to Washington, the single most anticipated and most memorable event. Yet some leave frustrated by the brevity of the tour, or the blandness of the exhibits, or the lack of opportunity to study a particularly compelling object or image. Thousands more are turned away because the tours are full. Recognizing that the public deserves the most informative and engaging tours possible, the *Comprehensive Design Plan* recommends major changes to the White House visitors program.

The first and most important is transforming the existing White House Visitor Center in the Commerce Building into an education center containing a museum, four small orientation theaters and new exhibits incorporating the latest technology and the most current scholarship. The new center will be a community institution where parents and children can learn about the White House and the presidency together; where

scholars will have access to original materials; where American history will come alive through imaginative texts, talks and special programs. A former chief of staff might reminisce about life at the president's elbow; the White House chef might describe the behind-the-scenes drama of a state dinner. Live television feeds of special White House events could be a regular feature at the new White House Education Center.

The center will build upon the emotional attachment people already feel for the White House, preparing them to appreciate its past and its present and encouraging them to learn more about what they have just seen. It will serve as a miniature research library, providing books, tapes, maps and photographs, as well as a quiet place to enjoy them. Selections from the White House's 40,000-piece collection of paintings, furniture and decorative arts will be on display, everything from the desk where Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his "fireside chats" to showpieces of presidential china.

All future White House tours will start from the education center, eliminating those painful waits in the rain and cold. After viewing the exhibits and a brief orientation film, visitors will proceed by moving sidewalk beneath 15th and E Streets to a point just outside the White House fence. This underground corridor will be illuminated by skylights and will recall the architecture of the White House. From East Executive Park, visitors will proceed directly to the east entrance of the White House. The lines will be shorter, the anticipation greater and the experience more memorable.

IN THE FUTURE, VISITORS WILL APPROACH THE WHITE HOUSE THROUGH AN UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR INSTEAD OF WAITING OUTSIDE IN THE RAIN AND COLD.

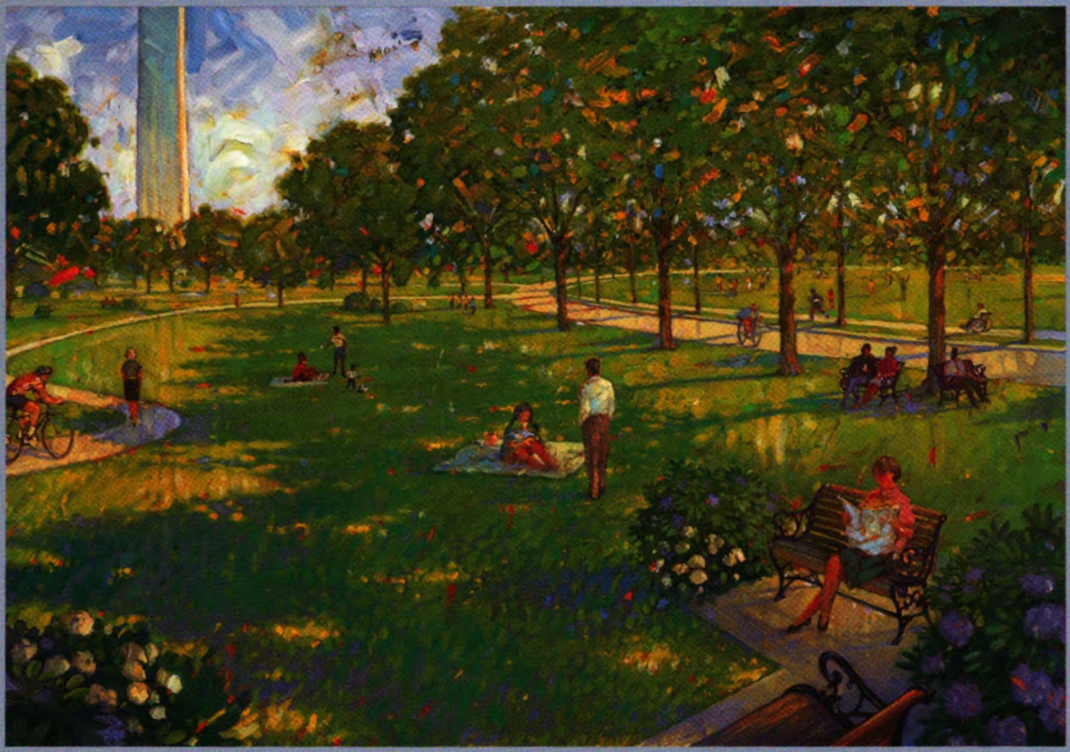
President's Park was created by some of the finest planners and landscape architects in the world, beginning with Pierre L'Enfant in the 18th century, and continuing with Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson Downing in the 19th and Frederick Law Olmsted in the 20th.

Pierre L'Enfant established the armature for the park, locating the new "President's House" on a low rise overlooking a series of terraces and gardens that would flow uninterrupted toward the Potomac. The vista was majestic, and with the addition of the Washington Monument and the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, it evolved into one of the world's great symbolic landscapes celebrating the nation's courage and resolve. American presidents cannot go to sleep at night without being reminded of their obligations to history.

## PRESIDENT'S PARK AS SETTING AND SYMBOL

Thomas Jefferson attempted to democratize L'Enfant's grand design by adding a stone fence around the White House and turning President's Square — now Lafayette Park — into a public space. Within the fence he added serpentine paths, vegetable gardens and hundreds of trees, arranged in soldierly rows around the White House.

In his 1851 plan, Andrew Jackson Downing proposed converting the low marshy area south of the White House into a series of picturesque woods and walkways encircling a



THE REDESIGNED EDGES OF THE ELLIPSE
PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE SETTING
FOR READING, PICNICKING AND JOGGING.

THE POPULARITY OF THE ELLIPSE HAS RUINED THE GRASS AND PRODUCED AN UGLY CLUTTER OF BLEACHERS, FENCES AND TRASH CANS.

broad, flat parade ground. The parade ground became the Ellipse and eventually the grand civic and ceremonial space that we enjoy today.

The 1935 Olmsted plan, still the guide for all landscaping inside the White House fence, reaffirmed L'Enfant's long vistas to the north and south. It was also the first plan to use trees and shrubs for security and privacy, a practice that continues today.

A major goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan* is to preserve and enhance this design legacy, starting with an update of the 1935 Olmsted plan and culminating in a new comprehensive landscape plan for all of President's Park.

In addition to providing a magnificent natural setting for the White House, President's Park is also a horticultural sampler in the romantic tradition. "My object is to form a collection of all the trees that will grow in Washington," wrote Downing, "... to form a public museum of living trees and shrubs." Most presidents since Jefferson have planted commemorative trees and shrubs on the White House grounds. The *Comprehensive Design Plan* calls for continuing this "public museum" tradition.

A complementary archaeological survey will identify and catalogue the significant artifacts within the park, which range from prehistoric stone points to the remains of pre-Revolutionary farms and Civil War encampments. This information will be made available to scholars and the public through exhibits and special programs at the new White House Education Center. The existing monuments and memorials in President's Park will be maintained in a manner appropriate to their historic setting.

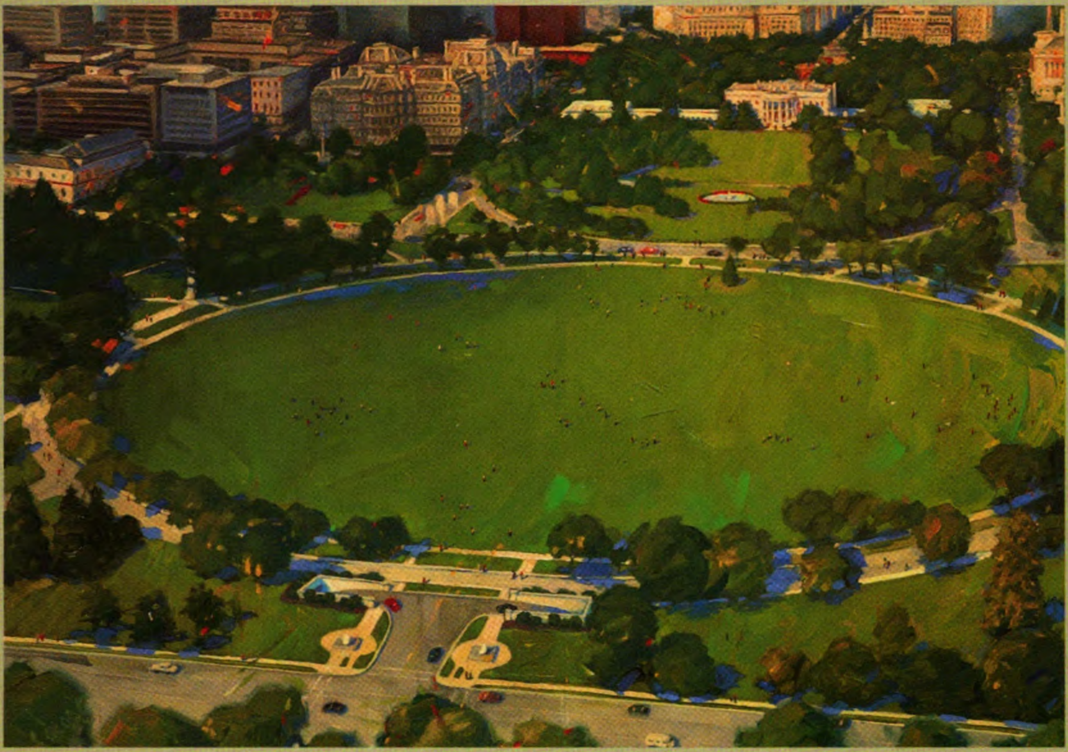
# THE HOUSE, THE PARK AND THE CITY

The White House and President's Park are symbols of the nation and centerpieces of its capital. Within easy walking distance of both are five historic districts, 40 monuments and memorials, and 60 national historic sites. The challenge now is to strengthen the connections between park and city without compromising the individual elements.

The principal threat to the integrity of President's Park is traffic. Roadways slice the landscape into separate and unequal pieces, fracturing the elegant synthesis that George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant originally envisioned. Cars and buses terrorize pedestrians and turn public space into parking lots. At certain times President's Park appears to be mainly bumpers and bollards.

Eliminating traffic within President's Park is a long-term goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan*. The proposed garages beneath Pennsylvania Avenue and the Ellipse will siphon off most of the parked cars, creating a more pastoral setting around the White House. The continued restriction of vehicular traffic on State, Hamilton, Jackson and Madison Places will reinforce this softening effect.

The Ellipse is one of the most popular areas of President's Park, a place for games and jogging and a handy illustration of the American way of life. Presidents enjoy escorting visiting heads of state to the south portico to watch a softball game



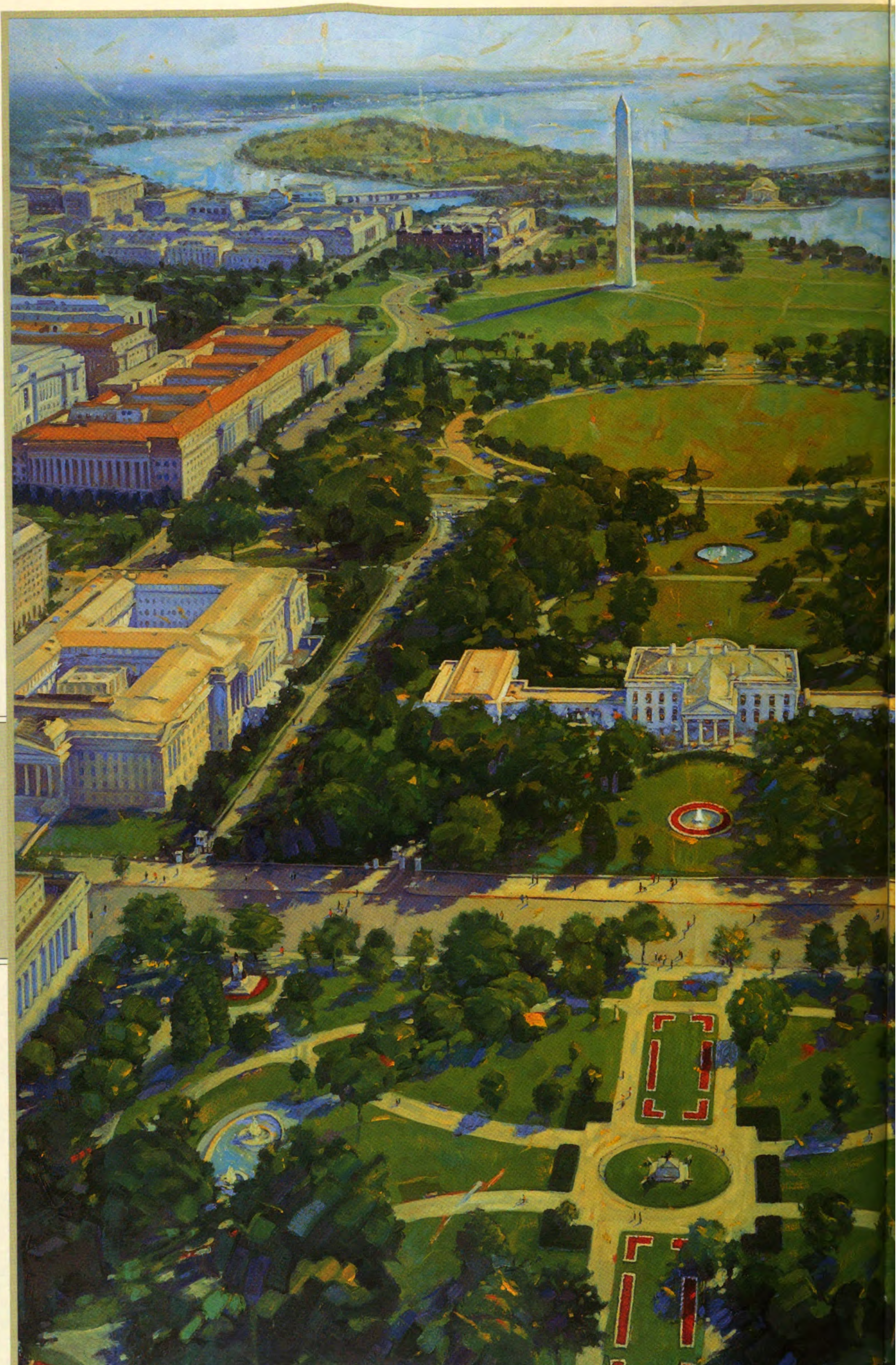
NEW UNDERGROUND PARKING WILL RECLAIM
THE ELLIPSE AREA FOR THE PUBLIC.

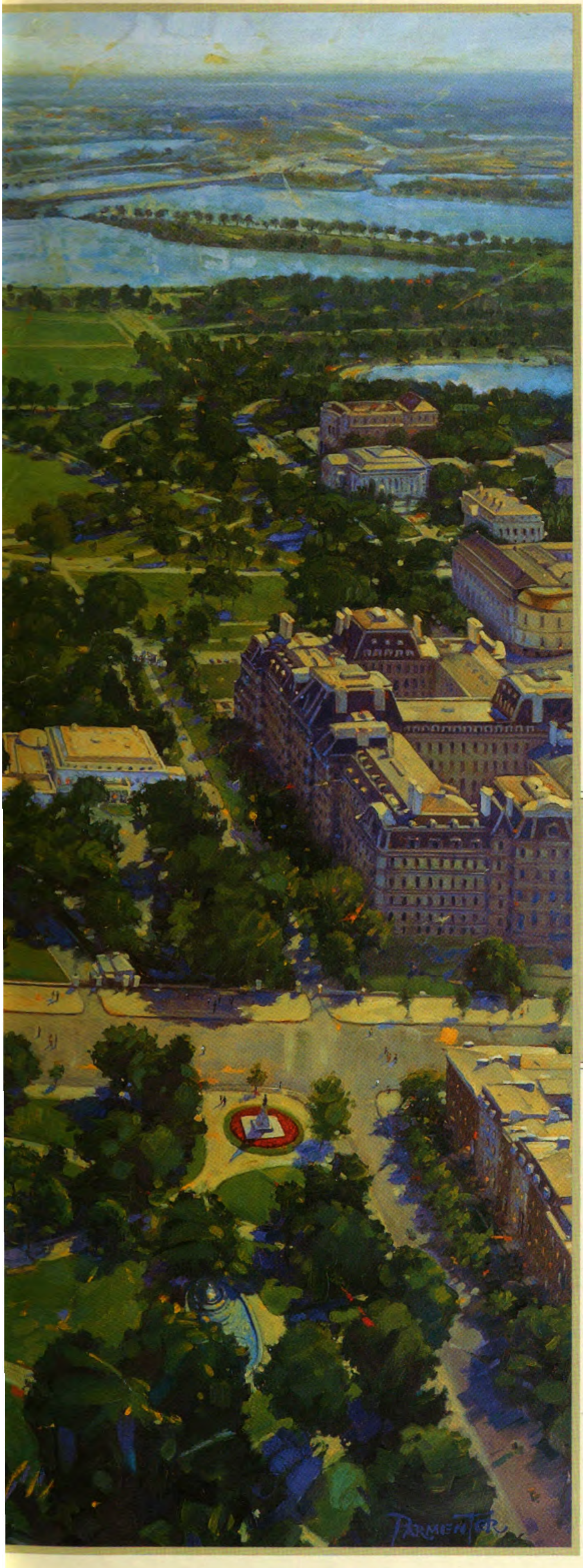
within sight of the White House. But the Ellipse has also been damaged by too many festivals and too many parked cars. In the spring it is muddy, in the summer a dusty brown field with a fringe of candy wrappers and empty soda cans. An underground steam line runs through its center, killing the grass above it. Compared to the manicured lushness of the White House grounds, the Ellipse seems like an afterthought.

WHITE HOUSE VISITORS WILL NO LONGER BATTLE TRAFFIC OR ENCOUNTER A WALL OF VENDORS AND TOUR BUSES.

The proposed underground garage will eliminate the surface-parking problem, leaving Downing's original "parade ground" free for soccer, softball and kite flying. But some restrictions, to be negotiated between the National Park Service and civic groups, will be placed on special events so that the Ellipse will not be ruined by its own popularity. The snack wagons and souvenir vans that now clutter 15th and 17th Streets will be removed to make President's Park more attractive.

To integrate city and park further, eight new gateways will be constructed around the perimeter of the site. These will not be security checkpoints but low-key ceremonial entrances that introduce visitors to a special neighborhood.





THE COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN PRESERVES THE GRAND VISTAS THAT INSPIRED GEORGE WASHINGTON AND ATTRACT MILLIONS OF VISITORS TO THE CITY EACH YEAR.

# BUILDING THE DREAM

It took eight years to produce the *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park*. It will take another 20 years and $300 million to implement it. The goal is not a cosmetic makeover of the White House and its setting, but insuring that the White House remains the functioning center of American government in the 21st century. ▮ The *Comprehensive Design Plan* will be implemented in five-year intervals, using a combination of public and private funds. The agencies that operate and administer the White House will seek annual appropriations from Congress to carry out the federal portions of the plan. They will also draft an agreement requiring all federal agencies involved with the White House to coordinate their construction and development projects with the *Comprehensive Design Plan*. ▮ A private campaign, directed by a nonprofit organization, may raise money for a specific project, such as the new education center and museum. A feasibility study has been commissioned for a capital fundraising campaign for this center. Other opportunities exist for joint ventures between government and news organizations, foundations, historical associations and other institutional partners.

FULL ELEVATION

# DESIGNING THE FUTURE

The White House is one of the most compelling symbols of America's democratic ideals, a three-dimensional expression of its fundamental principles and values. It is also America's public face, instantly recognizable throughout the world. ▮ Fifty years have passed since the leg of Margaret Truman's grand piano broke through the ceiling of the Family Dining Room, and the family was forced to move across Pennsylvania Avenue to Blair House, the president's guest quarters, while the "President's House" was renovated from basement to roof. Ten presidents have occupied the White House since then, and it still is equipped like a 1950s residence. ▮ The *Comprehensive Design Plan* will change that by making the White House more livable for first families, more workable for its staff, more informative for visitors and more inspiring for the nation. It will provide the space and the services that are taken for granted in modern office buildings but that are missing from the headquarters of the American government. It will protect the White House's historic setting and dramatic vistas, while increasing the enjoyment of the millions who visit it annually. And it will give everyone a chance to experience President's Park as it was meant to be — not a collection of fragments linked only by service roads and parking lots but a continuous and coherent landscape in which individual historical elements come together to form a dignified and memorable whole.

# Acknowledgments

Hundreds of people from across the nation contributed to the *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park.* In addition, the following members of the project's Executive Committee helped to guide the development of this plan.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE RESIDENCE AT THE WHITE HOUSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (UNTIL 4/96)

US DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

US SECRET SERVICE

WHITE HOUSE MILITARY OFFICE

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# THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE CITY

BOB HUMPHREYS, NPS

The White House is the heart of Washington and the emotional touchstone for the nation. Within its walls Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his "fireside chats." At moments of celebration or national tragedy people gather spontaneously at its gates for a reassuring glimpse of America's House. Its elegant façade has provided a backdrop for suffragettes, freedom riders and anti-war protestors. On its sloping south lawn children gather for Easter egg hunts; thousands stroll through its gardens each year. Unlike most official residences, which stand as remote expressions of political power, the White House remains a living symbol of our government's accessibility.

A major goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan* is to increase the accessibility of the White House and President's Park by strengthening their connections to the surrounding city. Within walking distance of both are five historic districts, 40 monuments and memorials, and over 60 national historic sites. The plan preserves the historic vistas linking the White House to Lafayette Park and 16th Street on the north, and the Jefferson Memorial and the Potomac River on the south.

An underground garage will eliminate the surface parking problems on the Ellipse, returning it to the public for everything from soccer and softball to kite flying. The northeast corner will become a public events plaza for concerts, pageants and other activities. To protect the Ellipse from its own popularity, a few restrictions on the scale and duration of events may be imposed, but the open, populist spirit of the place will remain unchanged.

To further integrate the park and the city, eight new entryways will be constructed on the perimeter of the site. Each will have a map and possibly a touch screen monitor listing events within President's Park and alerting visitors that they are entering a special precinct.

The *Comprehensive Design Plan* recognizes that the severe traffic congestion in downtown Washington requires interim remedies along E Street. The Federal Highway Administration, with the cooperation of the District of Columbia and the National Park Service, is therefore restoring westbound traffic on E Street between 15th and 17th Streets.

Beyond that, federal and district officials will collaborate on a comprehensive plan for downtown traffic, including a long-term solution for E Street. Other proposals, such as tunnels, may also be considered in the future.

Changes to Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and Lafayette Park are currently outside this plan. The block has been closed to cars and trucks — but not pedestrians — since the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. With help from citizens and consultants, the National Park Service has developed a design to convert the block into a landscaped pedestrian mall. The design is complete but not yet approved. When it is, it will be folded into the *Comprehensive Design Plan*.

OUR HOUSE
OUR HERITAGE
A PLAN FOR THE WHITE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S PARK IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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US SECRET SERVICE

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# WHITE HOUSE EDUCATION CENTER

STEVE RUTH, NPS

One-third of all visitors to Washington go to museums and historical sites, and 1.2 million of them show up at the White House. Millions more drive past it, or pause to photograph it through the wrought iron fence. It is one of the most admired and scrutinized buildings in the world, in part because it hums with the real business of government. Its appeal cuts across generations, occupations and national borders. The most frequent question at the city's convention and visitors association is "How do I get a tour of the White House?"

The new White House Education Center will give visitors the care and attention they deserve. Instead of shivering in winter and sweltering on bleachers during the summer, they will assemble in four intimate theaters, each seating 250 to 300 people, to view a short orientation film about the White House and President's Park. They will then proceed by moving sidewalk through an underground corridor to a point near the White House fence, ready to begin their tour.

Yet this speaks mainly to convenience. In addition to a film and a brochure, the education center will provide a comprehensive introduction to the history and symbolism of the White House. A dramatic scale model in the main hall will offer glimpses of all its rooms, including those closed to the public. Surrounding it will be new exhibits, many computerized and interactive. Click on "Gilbert Stuart" and hear the fascinating story of his famous portrait of George Washington and its dramatic rescue by Dolley Madison. Click again to view the presidential china, or to visit Monticello, the Ronald Reagan Library and other presidential sites.

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At the same time, the White House is the world's most important office, the center of our national political life. Like the residence, the office needs to be updated for the 21st century, particularly its utilities, storage areas and meeting spaces. The shortage of all three has evolved from an inconvenience to a crisis, with delivery trucks and service vehicles clogging driveways, florists and chefs dancing around one another in narrow corridors, and miles of ugly television cable snaking across the grounds. The media facilities are particularly embarrassing, with reporters forced to work in spaces the size of phone booths. Most community access stations are better equipped.

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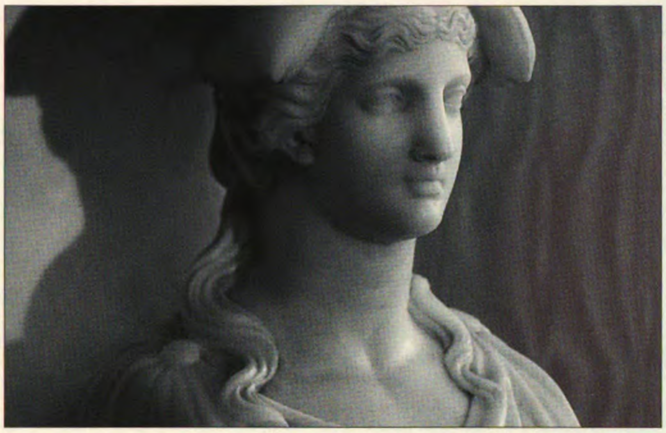
# ART AND ARCHITECTURE


JACK E. BOUCHER, NPS

Architect James Hoban's 1792 plan for the White House, like Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the city, expresses neo-classical ideals of order, symmetry and decorum. The house occupies the intersection of two major axes, one extending from 16th Street south to the Jefferson Memorial and the Potomac River, the other from the steps of the Capitol west along Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. In the first decades of the republic, the president at dinner was not only at the center of his house — more or less — but if one imagines lines of influence radiating outward to the city, the mountains and the prairies beyond, he was at the center of the nation as well.

Hoban's final design consisted of a compact two-story stone building in the popular Federalist style, with a symmetrical plan that included an "elliptic saloon" (now the Blue Room) and a large portico that was never built. Thomas Jefferson, working with émigré English architect Benjamin Latrobe, added east and west colonnades in 1804. After the British burned the White House in 1814, Hoban redesigned it with the dramatic north and south porticos that we see today.

Nothing in the *Comprehensive Design Plan* compromises the dignity and the integrity of Hoban's design or those that came after it. All the proposed changes are subordinate to them and to the White House's role as the symbolic heart of the capital and the nation. The new family recreation space, for example, will be located either in a renovated area adjacent to the White House or underground immediately to the north. The proposed parking garages and storage areas will likewise be invisible, while the expanded media space will be tucked discreetly beneath West Wing Drive. The goal is to increase the efficiency of the White House without disturbing its architecture or its historic setting.

Inside the White House are 40,000 pieces of silver, china, furniture and glassware, as well as important American paintings from the 18th century to the present. Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington is the most famous, but superb works by Thomas Moran, Fitz Hugh Lane and Georgia O'Keeffe also reside there.

Because of severe space limitations, the bulk of this priceless collection remains in storage, known only to scholars and curators. The *Comprehensive Design Plan* recommends making it more visible through regular exhibitions and public programs at the new education center in the Commerce Building. The presidential china, for example, offers a capsule history of evolving American tastes in decorative arts. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's desk, with its crude microphone, is synonymous with the New Deal and American resolve during World War II. Instead of being out of sight, more rumor than fact, the collection will be integrated into the story of the White House and the American presidency.

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STEVE RUTH, NPS

Just as the *Comprehensive Design Plan* protects the historic integrity of the White House, a new comprehensive landscape plan will enhance its grounds and preserve the singular vistas from President's Park to the city and the river.

All future landscape work within the White House fence will follow the 1935 Olmsted plan, which like the house itself will be updated for the 21st century. For areas outside the fence where historic vistas have been obscured (Lafayette Park, the Ellipse) or where maintenance has been slipshod, a new comprehensive landscape plan will be developed and followed.

Consistency and continuity are to be the guiding principles of this new plan. Although the selection of individual plant materials will remain flexible, it will be guided by the earlier work of Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson Downing and the Olmsted brothers. Plantings will continue to reflect traditional landscape design principles in their massing and placement, with native species introduced where appropriate. Vegetation will still be used to define and refine spatial relationships within the park and to screen sensitive areas from the street. Plantings outside the White House fence will be of the same quality, size and diversity as those inside.

The removal of surface parking from President's Park will permit the restoration of the Ellipse and other abused areas. Intrusions, such as an underground steam line and a scattering of bleachers and snow fences, will be removed or relocated.

Most presidents since Jefferson have planted commemorative trees and shrubs on the White House grounds, and that tradition will continue, with all culturally significant specimens that have been lost or damaged, such as American elms, replaced with new stock from National Park Service nurseries. A cultural landscape report, documenting the significant features of the White House grounds and President's Park, is being prepared as part of the *Comprehensive Design Plan*. Existing monuments and memorials in President's Park will be appropriately maintained.

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JACK E. BOUCHER, NPS

The *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park* will be implemented in five-year increments over 20 years, at an estimated cost of $300 million. This schedule could shift forward or back depending on funding and legislative opportunities.

**Phase I** reduces clutter and congestion on the site through construction of a parking garage and storage areas beneath Pennsylvania Avenue, and the pedestrian and vehicular connections to them. Removing cars and vans from President's Park is a critical first step in humanizing it, while the new storage space will unsnarl the day-to-day operations of the White House. A comprehensive landscape plan is also scheduled for this phase.

**Phase II** caters exclusively to White House visitors by making tours safer, more enjoyable and more informative. A new White House Education Center in the Commerce Building will provide interactive exhibits and special programs, a welcoming underground link to the White House and a new gateway at E and 15th Streets.

**Phase III** recognizes the importance of the White House as a world stage with a new press and media center beneath West Wing Drive. Meeting space and the underground pedestrian and delivery connections from the White House to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building and the Treasury Building are also planned for this phase.

**Phase IV** completes the plan with construction of an 850-car Ellipse parking garage and new entrances to President's Park on Constitution Avenue and E Street.

The efficient operation of the White House is a non-partisan issue; it must work for whoever occupies it. Consequently, those portions of the plan that support the home and office of the president should be paid for by the ultimate owners of the White House — the American people.

Other elements of the plan, particularly those dealing with activities outside the White House fence, may be candidates for private donations and public-private partnerships. Over the years the White House and President's Park have benefited substantially from the quiet philanthropy of numerous individuals, foundations and professional associations, including the White House Historical Association, the Enid Annenberg Haupt Charitable Trust and the late Paul Mellon. In the years ahead, the White House Education Center, the Ellipse events plaza, the civic gateways and the landscaping for President's Park may also be candidates for substantial private support.

| Phase I | Phase II | Phase III | Phase IV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parking and storage areas under Pennsylvania Avenue, and their pedestrian and vehicular connections. | New education center and museum. Underground pedestrian corridor to White House and new gateway located at 15th and E Streets. | New press and media center. East/west corridor from Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building to Treasury Building. | Ellipse parking garage. New gateways on Constitution Avenue and E Street. |

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The *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park* has been prepared by the National Park Service, with the assistance of other federal agencies and numerous private organizations and consultants. It is the first comprehensive plan for the White House, distilled from dozens of technical reports and alternative futures for the most famous residence in America.

Copies of the plan may be obtained from
Office of White House Liaison
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, D.C. 20242
Phone: (202) 619-6344 and (800) 292-0832
E-mail: White_House_Liaison@nps.gov

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BOB HUMPHREYS, NPS

The White House is the heart of Washington and the emotional touchstone for the nation. Within its walls Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his "fireside chats." At moments of celebration or national tragedy people gather spontaneously at its gates for a reassuring glimpse of America's House. Its elegant façade has provided a backdrop for suffragettes, freedom riders and anti-war protestors. On its sloping south lawn children gather for Easter egg hunts; thousands stroll through its gardens each year. Unlike most official residences, which stand as remote expressions of political power, the White House remains a living symbol of our government's accessibility.

A major goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan* is to increase the accessibility of the White House and President's Park by strengthening their connections to the surrounding city. Within walking distance of both are five historic districts, 40 monuments and memorials, and over 60 national historic sites. The plan preserves the historic vistas linking the White House to Lafayette Park and 16th Street on the north, and the Jefferson Memorial and the Potomac River on the south.

An underground garage will eliminate the surface parking problems on the Ellipse, returning it to the public for everything from soccer and softball to kite flying. The northeast corner will become a public events plaza for concerts, pageants and other activities. To protect the Ellipse from its own popularity, a few restrictions on the scale and duration of events may be imposed, but the open, populist spirit of the place will remain unchanged.

To further integrate the park and the city, eight new entryways will be constructed on the perimeter of the site. Each will have a map and possibly a touch screen monitor listing events within President's Park and alerting visitors that they are entering a special precinct.

The *Comprehensive Design Plan* recognizes that the severe traffic congestion in downtown Washington requires interim remedies along E Street. The Federal Highway Administration, with the cooperation of the District of Columbia and the National Park Service, is therefore restoring westbound traffic on E Street between 15th and 17th Streets.

Beyond that, federal and district officials will collaborate on a comprehensive plan for downtown traffic, including a long-term solution for E Street. Other proposals, such as tunnels, may also be considered in the future.

Changes to Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and Lafayette Park are currently outside this plan. The block has been closed to cars and trucks — but not pedestrians — since the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. With help from citizens and consultants, the National Park Service has developed a design to convert the block into a landscaped pedestrian mall. The design is complete but not yet approved. When it is, it will be folded into the *Comprehensive Design Plan*.

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